



*The following media statement was issued today by
the NL branch of the College of Family Physicians of Canada*

Relocation of lab services in Newfoundland & Labrador

September 10, 2009

MEDIA STATEMENT for Dr. Norah Duggan, President-Elect,

The Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter of The College of Family Physicians

On behalf of The Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter of The College of Family Physicians and family physicians in our province, I want to express our concern with the recent announcement by Minister of Health, Paul Oram to close and relocate laboratory and X-ray facilities from the Lewisporte and Flowers Cove communities. Specifically, we have two areas of concern.

This proposal impacts on our first priority: timely access to care for our patients.

- This reduction in services impacts access to care for patients.
- Family doctors in rural communities need these services to provide health care for their patients.
- To maintain access to care we need to develop a collaborative approach to providing required services that support patients and family doctors.
- Having sufficient resources in place will help retain physician resources to keep providing quality health care to the people of NL.

The second area of concern is the process that has been used to implement the changes to laboratory services without consultation with family doctors, other health professionals and patients who are directly impacted.

- Going forward, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss such important issues with our provincial government in a collaborative process to help determine what's best for everyone involved.
- We invite Minister Oram to work with us. We hope we can work together to develop a process that is inclusive and productive to meet the challenges of delivering quality healthcare to the people of NL.

Closing Statement:

The Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter of The College of Family Physicians urges the provincial government to reconsider its proposal to close lab and radiology services in Lewisporte and Flowers Cove. We have serious concerns about the related risks to our patients' health and lives. To date there has been no consultation with family doctors, other health professionals, and especially our patients who are impacted by the suggested closures. If it is determined that changes to the health care delivery system are needed, we must have the opportunity to discuss the issues to ensure that we can provide the best possible health care to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.